Step 2: Analyze the argument As always, read it through carefully, looking for conclusions and premises as well as any of the common flawed patterns of reasoning. Here it is again.

> Political scientist: All governments worthy of respect allow their citizens to dissent from governmental policies. No government worthy of respect leaves minorities unprotected. Thus any government that protects minorities permits criticism of its policies.

This looks eminently diagrammable. When you see quantities like "all" or "none," you can turn these statements into conditionals and diagram them. Don't forget to note the conclusion and premises, and since you're looking for a flaw, the assumption.

- Author's conclusion: *Any government that protects minorities permits criticism of its policies.*
- Author's premises: *All governments worthy of respect allow their citizens to dissent from government policies and no government worthy of respect leaves minorities unprotected.*
- Author's assumption: *The author takes two separate facts and concludes that if you have one, you must also have the other.*

Step 3: Act Here's what we get when we diagram.

All governments worthy of respect allow their citizens to dissent (A → B); no government worthy of respect leaves minorities unprotected (A → C). So, any government that protects minorities permits criticism of its policies (C → B).

The arguer didn't properly connect C (not protecting minorities) with B (allowing dissent). Just because a government worthy of respect has these two traits does not guarantee that these two traits are always together. Now all we have to do is eliminate any answer choice that doesn't exhibit the same flawed logic.

The credited response to a Parallel-the-Reasoning question will be a new argument that matches the key features and structure of the original argument.

Step 4: Answer using Process of Elimination Now you're going to carry your diagram to the answer choices and eliminate anything that doesn't match.

(A) Politicians are admirable if they put the interests of those they serve above their own interests. So politicians who sometimes ignore the interests of their own constituents in favor of the nation as a whole deserve admiration, for they are putting the interests of those they serve above their own.

Diagram it: politicians who put others' interests above their own are admirable (A → B). Politicians who put national interests above their own constituents' interests are admirable (A → B again). This doesn't match the argument, so it isn't the answer. Eliminate it.

(B) All jazz musicians are capable of improvising and no jazz musician is incapable of reading music. Therefore all musicians who can read music can improvise.

Diagram it: jazz musicians can improvise (A → B) and jazz musicians can read music (A → C), so musicians who can read music can improvise (C → B). Bingo! This is the same type of flawed reasoning as that above since this argument fails to consider that some jazz musicians might be able to do one but not the other. Hold on to it.

(C) Ecosystems with cool, dry climates are populated by large mammals. Ecosystems populated by large mammals have abundant and varied plant life. Thus ecosystems that do not have cool, dry climates have abundant and varied plant life.

Diagram it: a place with a cool, dry climate has large mammals (A → B). A place with large mammals has lots of plants (B → C). A place without a cool, dry climate has lots of plants (~A → C). This doesn't match the argument, so it isn't the answer. Get rid of it.

(D) Some intellectuals are not socially active, and no intellectual is a professional athlete. Therefore any professional athlete is socially active.

This one works out to A → B for the first part, A → ~C for the middle, and C → B for the last sentence. This can be appealing because it is really close, and if you miss translating the middle as, "if one is an intellectual, one is not an athlete," you can fall for it. Get rid of this one.

First-person narratives reveal the thoughts of the narrator but conceal those of the other characters. Some third-person narratives reveal the motives of every character. Thus books that rely on making all characters' motives apparent should be written in the third person.

You have (A → B but ~C) in the first sentence, and then (D → B and C) in the second sentence. The final sentence becomes (B and C → D). It's not even close to the original. It's out.

This leaves you with (B) because it's the only one that matches the structure of the original.

Nice job! You got the right answer simply by diagramming the statement in the argument, and then diagramming each of the answer choices until you found the one that matched the original diagram. However, you probably noticed that it took a long time to do this question. Many times, Parallel-the-Reasoning questions are even longer than this one and could take you three minutes to do. If you spend your time doing these questions, you might get through only half of an Arguments section! Therefore, be sure to save these for the end.

The Argument

18. A small car offers less protection in an accident than a large car does, but since a smaller car is more maneuverable, it is better to drive a small car because then accidents will be less likely.

Which one of the following arguments employs reasoning most similar to that employed by the argument above?

(A) An artist's best work is generally that done in the time before the artist becomes very well known. When artists grow famous and are diverted from artistic creation by demands for public appearances, their artistic work suffers. So artists' achieving great fame can diminish their artistic reputations.

(B) It is best to insist that a child spend at least some time every day reading indoors. Even though it may cause the child some unhappiness to have to stay indoors when others are outside playing, the child can benefit from the time by learning to enjoy books and becoming prepared for lifelong learning.

(C) For this work, vehicles built of lightweight materials are more practical than vehicles built of heavy materials. This is so because while lighter vehicles do not last as long as heavier vehicles, they are cheaper to replace.

(D) Although it is important to limit the amount of sugar and fat in one's diet, it would be a mistake to try to follow a diet totally lacking in sugar and fat. It is better to consume sugar and fat in moderation, for then the cravings that lead to uncontrolled binges will be prevented.

(E) A person who exercises vigorously every day has less body fat than an average person to draw upon in the event of a wasting illness. But one should still endeavor to exercise vigorously every day, because doing so significantly decreases the chances of contracting a wasting illness.

PrepTest 44, Section 4, Question 21

Here's How to Crack It

Step 1: Assess the question Read the question first, as always. Here it is.

> Which one of the following arguments employs reasoning most similar to that employed by the argument above?

This question is asking us to parallel the reasoning, with no mention of any flaws. You'll have to diagram or summarize the argument as best you can, diagram each answer, and see if they match.

Step 2: Analyze the argument Read it carefully, keeping a sharp eye out for "all," "only," "some," or "most" wording, as well as conditional statements.

> A small car offers less protection in an accident than a large car does, but since a smaller car is more maneuverable, it is better to drive a small car because then accidents will be less likely.

This doesn't contain conditional statements, but it still has a clear argument structure that you can work with and map out. You are asked to match the reasoning, not the flaw, so don't worry about finding flaws or assumptions.

- Author's conclusion: *Driving a small car is better because of the lower likelihood of accidents.*
- Author's premises: *Even though small cars offer less protection than large cars, they are more maneuverable.*

Step 3: Act Summarize the argument in general terms to make it easier to match the answers to it. In general terms, the author chooses one option over another because the disadvantage (less protection) of the chosen option is outweighed by an advantage (maneuverability) that makes the disadvantage a non-issue (accidents less likely). Now we need to find an answer that has similar features.

Step 4: Answer using Process of Elimination Now analyze your answers and eliminate answers that don't match.

An artist's best work is generally that done in the time before the artist becomes very well known. When artists grow famous and are diverted from artistic creation by demands for public appearances, their artistic work suffers. So artists' achieving great fame can diminish their artistic reputations.

Does this match your summary? There is no choice of a better option in this argument, so it doesn't match. Eliminate it!

(B) It is best to insist that a child spend at least some time every day reading indoors. Even though it may cause the child some unhappiness to have to stay indoors when others are outside playing, the child can benefit from the time by learning to enjoy books and becoming prepared for lifelong learning.

Does this match your summary? One option (read inside) is chosen over another (playing outside) because the disadvantage (unhappy) is outweighed by an advantage (lifelong learning), but where is the advantage making the disadvantage a non-issue? It's not. Get rid of it!

(C) For this work, vehicles built of lightweight materials are more practical than vehicles built of heavy materials. This is so because while lighter vehicles do not last as long as heavier vehicles, they are cheaper to replace.

In mapping this one out, you have one option (lightweight materials) chosen over another (heavy materials) because the advantage (cheaper) outweighs the disadvantage (not last as long). It doesn't imply that the advantage of being cheaper to replace makes the disadvantage of not lasting as long a non-issue, but this choice is the closest to the original so far, so keep it.

(D) Although it is important to limit the amount of sugar and fat in one's diet, it would be a mistake to try to follow a diet totally lacking in sugar and fat. It is better to consume sugar and fat in moderation, for then the cravings that lead to uncontrolled binges will be prevented.

How well does this one hold up? Here, the choice is not between two entirely different options, each with an advantage or disadvantage. It is about limiting the only option presented to prevent one negative consequence. It doesn't match, so this one is out.

(E) A person who exercises vigorously every day has less body fat than an average person to draw upon in the event of a wasting illness. But one should still endeavor to exercise vigorously every day, because doing so significantly decreases the chances of contracting a wasting illness.

Does this match your summary? One option (exercise) is better than another (no exercise) because the advantage (not getting sick) is outweighed by the disadvantage (less body fat) by making the disadvantage a non-issue (getting sick less likely). So far so good! Let's keep it.

Now compare (C) and (E). Choice (C) arrives at the conclusion that lightweight vehicles are better not because they make replacement a non-issue—that's still going to happen—but because they are cheaper to replace. The heavier vehicles are a better option if you want to avoid having to replace the vehicle. Both the original argument and (E) endorse the option that reduces the likelihood of the disadvantage, while (C) does not. That makes (E) the credited response.

Wow. Good work! But notice again how long it took to map out each and every answer choice, which means you might want to skip this one altogether, or save it for the very end. Notice, also, how similar the answers were. You can save a little time and headache by eliminating an answer as soon as you find a part that doesn't match.

Arguments Technique: Using Process of Elimination with Parallel-the-Reasoning Questions

It's pretty straightforward—if you are able to diagram the argument, then you must go to the answer choices and diagram those as well. Write it out and then you've got proof that the choice either matches or doesn't match the argument.

Sometimes you can't diagram Parallel-the-Reasoning questions. In these instances, try to describe the reasoning in the argument in general terms. Look for patterns that can be easily summed up (for example, we have two things that appear to be similar and then we note a difference, or one thing is attributed to be the cause of another). Try to find an answer that could be summed up in the same way. Start by matching up conclusions; then work backward through the argument to match up each piece. If you find any part of an answer choice that you can't match up with part of the original argument, eliminate it.

Hint:
Whenever possible, diagram Parallel-the-Reasoning on scratch paper; then diagram the answer choices and compare the diagrams.

Summary: Parallel-the-Reasoning Questions

Refer to the chart below on how to approach Parallel-the-Reasoning questions.

Sample Question Phrasings	Act
Which one of the following is most similar in reasoning to the argument above? *The flawed pattern of reasoning exhibited by the argument above is most similar to that in which of the following?*	• Parallel-the-Reasoning questions will contain either flawed or valid reasoning, and the question will tip you off. • Try to diagram the argument and then diagram each of the answer choices, comparing each one to the diagram you came up with for the argument itself. • If the argument is flawed, be careful not to choose an answer that fixes it. • Save Parallel-the-Reasoning questions for LAST.

CRACKING ARGUMENTS: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now you've learned how to approach every type of question the LSAT will throw at you in an Arguments section.

How do you integrate this knowledge into working a whole Arguments section?

Pace Yourself

You know that you have only 35 minutes to tackle an entire Arguments section. But you're also faced with the fact that to get the credited response, you have to invest a significant amount of time in each argument. Hopefully, you've seen that these questions are doable—with the right approach—but that you might fall for traps or miss key words if you rush through them too quickly.

Hint
Check out the pacing chart on page 358.

The bottom line on effective pacing is this: *don't rush!* There are questions in which you'll be able to analyze the argument easily, predict the answer accurately, and find the answer you predicted quickly. Keep moving through these questions. But there will be others in which the argument takes a little extra time to analyze, or in which two or more of the answer choices seem as if they have a shot—or, alternatively, in which none of the answer choices is what you were hoping for. In these cases, it's important to slow down. Take more time to understand the question, the argument, and the answer choices when you're struggling. This isn't wasted time; it's the real work of LSAT Arguments.

Of course, along with spending time where you need to spend it, you should also keep an overall sense of what target you need to hit. You can arrive at a rough pacing target for Arguments by looking at the percentage you get right on the section and dividing that number by 3; round up to get a sense of what number of questions you're aiming for. For example, if you're getting 60 percent right on Arguments sections, then you'll want to shoot for 20 questions on each Arguments section. You might not hit this number exactly, but if you're significantly short of that number, then chances are you'll need to work faster to improve; if, on the other hand, you're getting 60 percent right but more or less finishing the section, then the only way you're going to be able to improve is to work on your accuracy; that will most likely necessitate slowing down.

Choose Wisely

You know that you have to invest a certain amount of time into each type of Arguments question to get the credited response. But you also know that some types of Arguments take less time than others. For instance, compare the amount of time that a Main Point question takes to the amount of time that a Parallel-the-Reasoning question takes. You have a choice in how to spend your time with each question. Does it make sense to tackle a bunch of time-consuming questions when there are others that take much less time to do but give you the same number of points? As you do more practice problems and evaluate your performance on them, you should get a pretty clear sense of where your strengths and weaknesses lie. You'll benefit by making charts of your performance on each section, broken down by question type, so that you can see your progress. (See Chapter 6 for additional study tips and information on evaluating your progress.) To help you plan your approach, here's a chart of the proportion of questions of each type that have shown up on recently administered LSATs.

	Approximate Number Per Section	Approximate % of Total Arguments
Main Point	2	7%
Necessary Assumption	3	7%
Sufficient Assumption	3	7%
Weaken	3–4	13%
Strengthen	2	8%
Resolve/Explain	1–2	5%
Inference	4	14%
Reasoning	2	6%
Flaw	3–4	13%
Principle	2–3	10%
Parallel-the-Reasoning	2	7%
Other	1	3%

The bottom line is this: do the questions that take you the least amount of time and that you're most comfortable with first. Once you start the section, make a decision about each question before you invest time answering it. Go after the ones that look short, sweet, and to the point, and leave the longer ones for later. Give priority to the tasks that you know play to your strengths. Likewise, if you come to an argument that really stumps you, don't worry about it—just put a mark next to it and move on. You can always come back once you've gone through all of the other arguments in the section.

Finally...

Practice, practice, practice. There are a number of different tasks that you'll be asked to perform in the Arguments section. As we've seen, each task will vary slightly in how you approach the argument and what you need to get out of it. There's no substitute for experience here. Use those previously administered LSATs that you've ordered from LSAC to get plenty of practice.

And remember that it's not enough to just work all the Arguments questions under the Sun. You'll have to go back and carefully evaluate your work. Figure out *why* you missed a question rather than simply looking at the right answer to learn why that one works. Did you miss the question because you didn't understand the argument? Did you miss a key word? Did you fall for an attractive distractor? Was the credited response one that didn't look very good but didn't have any flaw? Did you misinterpret the task presented by the question?

This kind of detailed evaluation will take time, but it is well worth it. Do it for Arguments. Do it for Games. Do it for Reading Comprehension. There are many places where errors can creep into the process. You'll be able to improve only if you know what your tendencies are and how you can go about changing those tendencies that negatively impact your performance.

Now you know what you need to do, so keep up the effort and you'll see the results.

YOU AND YOUR CHART

The chart on the following pages will help you on the Arguments section. Lucky for you, we have posted a PDF of this chart in your online Student Tools—you can print it from there, then you should become intimately familiar with this chart. Put it in a prominent place. Make another copy and carry it along with you so you can refer to it while you're working practice problems. You should know this chart like the back of your hand by the time you take the real LSAT.

Question Type	Sample Question Phrasings	Act
Main Point	*What is the author's main point?* *The main conclusion drawn in the author's argument is that...* *The argument is structured to lead to which one of the following conclusions?*	• Identify the conclusion and premises. • Use the Why Test and then match your conclusion against the five answer choices. • Be careful not to fall for a premise in the answer choices. • When down to two choices, look for extreme wording and relevance to eliminate one choice and be left with the credited response.
Necessary Assumption	*Which of the following is an assumption on which the argument relies?* *The argument above assumes which of the following?* *The writer's argument depends on assuming which of the following?*	• Identify the conclusion, premises, and assumptions of the author. • If you're having trouble finding the assumption, look for a gap between two different ideas in the argument. • The assumption will always at least mildly strengthen the author's conclusion and is NECESSARY for the conclusion to follow from the information provided. • When down to two choices, negate each statement to see if the argument falls apart. If it does, that's your answer.

Question Type	Sample Question Phrasings	Act
Sufficient Assumption	*Which one of the following, if assumed, would enable the conclusion to be properly drawn?* *The conclusion follows logically if which one of the following is assumed?*	• Identify the conclusion, premises, and assumptions of the author. • Look for language in the conclusion that is not accounted for in the premise. • Paraphrase an answer that would strongly connect the premises to the conclusion and shore up the language gap. • Eliminate answer choices that bring in new information.
Weaken	*Which one of the following, if true, would most undermine the author's conclusion?* *Which of the following statements, if true, would most call into question the results achieved by the scientists?*	• Identify the conclusion, premises, and assumptions of the author. • Read critically, looking for instances in which the author made large leaps in logic. • Then, when you go to the answer choices, look for a choice that has the most negative impact on that leap in logic. • Assume all choices to be hypothetically true.

Question Type	Sample Question Phrasings	Act
Strengthen	*Which one of the following statements, if true, would most support the author's conclusion?* *Which one of the following statements, if true, would strengthen the author's argument?* *Which of the following principles, if established, justifies the conclusion drawn in the argument above?*	• Identify the conclusion, premises, and assumptions of the author. • Read critically, looking for where the author made large leaps in logic. • Then, when you go to the answer choices, look for a choice that has the most positive impact on that gap. • Assume all choices to be hypothetically true.
Resolve/ Explain	*Which one of the following provides the best resolution to the apparent paradox described by the committee member?* *Which one of the following statements, if true, would explain the discrepancy found by the scientists?*	• Identify the apparent discrepancy or paradox. • Go to the answer choices and look for a piece of information that, when added to the argument, allows both facts from the argument to be true. • Assume all choices to be hypothetically true.
Inference	*Which one of the following statements can be validly inferred from the information above?* *If the statements above are true, then which of the following must also be true?* *Which one of the following conclusions can be validly drawn from the passage above?* *Which one of the following conclusions is best supported by the passage above?*	• Read carefully, paying close attention to qualifying language, and then go to the answer choices. • Once there, eliminate any answer choices that are not directly supported by evidence in the passage. • Look for relevance and extreme language to eliminate answer choices. • Use the contrapositive if there are "if...then" statements contained in the passage and in the answer choices.

Question Type	Sample Question Phrasings	Act
Reasoning	*The argument proceeds by...* *Leah responds to Kevin by doing which one of the following?* *The method the activist uses to object to the developer's argument is to...* *Dr. Jacobs does which of the following?* *Which one of the following most accurately describes the role played in the argument by the claim that...*	• Read the arguments carefully and then describe what is happening in your own words, focusing on the purpose structure and the author's conclusion and premises. • Take this description and rigorously apply it to all the answer choices. • Once you're at the answer choices, use the technique of comparing the actions described in the answer choices against those that actually occur in the arguments. • Eliminate anything that doesn't appear in the argument.
Flaw	*Which of the following indicates a flaw in the author's reasoning?* *A criticism of the arguments would most likely emphasize that it...* *The reasoning in the argument is most vulnerable to criticism on the grounds that the argument...* *The argument above relies on which of the following questionable techniques?*	• Break down the argument into its parts; the flaw is usually related to an assumption. • State in your own words what the problem with the argument is. • With each answer, try to match the actions described in the answer choices with those of the argument itself. Look for the choice that has the same problem you found. • Eliminate the answers that don't match; look for the answer that addresses the assumption.

Question Type	Sample Question Phrasings	Act
Principle Match	*The reasoning above most closely conforms to which of the following principles?* *Which one of the following examples conforms most closely to the principle given in the argument above?*	• Make sure you know in which direction the argument flows. Are you being asked to find a principle that conforms to a situation, or a situation that conforms to a principle? • Once you're sure, look for an answer that most closely matches the general principle underlying the argument.
Parallel-the-Reasoning	*Which one of the following is most similar in reasoning to the argument above?* *The flawed pattern of reasoning exhibited by the argument above is most similar to that in which of the following?*	• Parallel-the-Reasoning questions will contain either flawed or valid reasoning, and the question will tip you off. • Try to diagram the argument and then diagram each of the answer choices, comparing each one to the diagram you came up with for the argument itself. • If the argument is flawed, be careful not to choose an answer that fixes it. • Save Parallel-the-Reasoning questions for LAST.

APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

Now it's time to put everything you've learned in this chapter to work on the following 13 arguments. The goal of this drill is to see how well you've mastered the four steps and how accurately you can work, not to see how fast you can get through these arguments.

If you want, you can measure the time it takes you to do all 13 questions. By measure, we mean set your timer to count up, and then turn it away so that you can't see the clock as you work on the questions. Put the timer in a drawer or in another room if necessary. When you're done, stop the clock and note how long it took you to complete them and then see how accurate you were. You should be learning to balance speed and accuracy throughout your preparation for the LSAT, but when in doubt, slow down and work for accuracy.

Arguments Practice Drill

Answers can be found in Chapter 8.

1. Acme Corporation offers unskilled workers excellent opportunities for advancement. As evidence, consider the fact that the president of the company, Ms. Garon, worked as an assembly line worker, an entry-level position requiring no special skills, when she first started at Acme.

   Which one of the following statements, if true, most weakens the reasoning above?

(A) Acme's vice president of operations also worked as an assembly line worker when he first started at Acme.

(B) Acme regularly hires top graduates of business schools and employs them briefly in each of a succession of entry-level positions before promoting them to management.

(C) Acme promotes its own employees to senior management positions much more frequently than it hires senior managers from other companies.

(D) Ms. Garon worked at Acme for more than 20 years before she was promoted to president.

(E) Acme pays entry-level employees slightly higher wages than most other businesses in the same industry.

2. Gardener: Researchers encourage us to allow certain kinds of weeds to grow among garden vegetables because they can repel caterpillars from the garden. While it is wise to avoid unnecessary use of insecticides, the researchers' advice is premature. For all we know, those kinds of weeds can deplete the soil of nutrients and moisture that garden crops depend on, and might even attract other kinds of damaging pests.

   Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the gardener's argument?

(A) To the extent that it is possible to do so, we should eliminate the use of insecticides in gardening.

(B) Allowing certain kinds of weeds to grow in vegetable gardens may contribute to a net increase in unwanted garden pests.

(C) Allowing the right kinds of weeds to grow in vegetable gardens can help toward controlling caterpillars without the use of insecticides.

(D) We should be cautious about the practice of allowing certain kinds of weeds to grow among garden vegetables.

(E) We should be skeptical about the extent to which certain kinds of weeds can reduce the presence of caterpillars in gardens.

3. Economist: During a recession, a company can cut personnel costs either by laying off some employees without reducing the wages of remaining employees or by reducing the wages of all employees without laying off anyone. Both damage morale, but layoffs damage it less, since the aggrieved have, after all, left. Thus, when companies must reduce personnel costs during recessions, they are likely to lay off employees.

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the economist's reasoning?

(A) Employee morale is usually the primary concern driving companies' decisions about whether to lay off employees or to reduce their wages.

(B) In general, companies increase wages only when they are unable to find enough qualified employees.

(C) Some companies will be unable to make a profit during recessions no matter how much they reduce personnel costs.

(D) When companies cut personnel costs during recessions by reducing wages, some employees usually resign.

(E) Some companies that have laid off employees during recessions have had difficulty finding enough qualified employees once economic growth resumed.

4. Global surveys estimate the earth's population of nesting female leatherback turtles has fallen by more than two-thirds in the past 15 years. Any species whose population declines by more than two-thirds in 15 years is in grave danger of extinction, so the leatherback turtle is clearly in danger of extinction.

Which one of the following is an assumption that the argument requires?

(A) The decline in the population of nesting female leatherback turtles is proportional to the decline in the leatherback turtle population as a whole.

(B) If the global population of leatherback turtles falls by more than two-thirds over the next 15 years, the species will eventually become extinct.

(C) The global population of leatherback turtles consists in roughly equal numbers of females and males.

(D) Very few leatherback turtles exist in captivity.

(E) The only way to ensure the continued survival of leatherback turtles in the wild is to breed them in captivity.

5. Pure science—research with no immediate commercial or technological application—is a public good. Such research requires a great amount of financial support and does not yield profits in the short term. Since private corporations will not undertake to support activities that do not yield short-term profits, a society that wants to reap the benefits of pure science ought to use public funds to support such research.

The claim about private corporations serves which one of the following functions in the argument?

(A) It expresses the conclusion of the argument.

(B) It explains what is meant by the expression "pure research" in the context of the argument.

(C) It distracts attention from the point at issue by introducing a different but related goal.

(D) It supports the conclusion by ruling out an alternative way of achieving the benefits mentioned.

(E) It illustrates a case where unfortunate consequences result from a failure to accept the recommendation offered.

6. Throughout a certain nation, electricity has actually become increasingly available to people in urban areas while energy production has been subsidized to help residents of rural areas gain access to electricity. However, even with the subsidy, many of the most isolated rural populations still have no access to electricity. Thus, the energy subsidy has failed to achieve its intended purpose.

   The reasoning in the argument is most vulnerable to criticism on the grounds that the argument

(A) takes for granted that the subsidy's intended purpose could have been achieved if the subsidy had not existed

(B) takes for granted that if a subsidy has any benefit for those whom it was not intended to benefit, then that subsidy has failed to achieve its intended purpose

(C) presumes, without providing justification, that the intended purpose of the subsidy was to benefit not only rural populations in the nation who have no electricity, but other people in the nation as well

(D) overlooks the possibility that even many of the people in the nation who live in urban areas would have difficulty gaining access to electricity without the subsidy

(E) fails to take into account that the subsidy could have helped many of the rural residents in the nation gain access to electricity even if many other rural residents in the nation were not helped in this way

7. The trees always blossom in May if April rainfall exceeds 5 centimeters. If April rainfall exceeds 5 centimeters, then the reservoirs are always full on May 1. The reservoirs were not full this May 1 and thus the trees will not blossom this May.

   Which one of the following exhibits a flawed pattern of reasoning most similar to the flawed pattern of reasoning in the argument above?

(A) If the garlic is in the pantry, then it is still fresh. And the potatoes are on the basement stairs if the garlic is in the pantry. The potatoes are not on the basement stairs, so the garlic is not still fresh.

(B) The jar reaches optimal temperature if it is held over the burner for 2 minutes. The contents of the jar liquefy immediately if the jar is at optimal temperature. The jar was held over the burner for 2 minutes, so the contents of the jar must have liquefied immediately.

(C) A book is classified "special" if it is more than 200 years old. If a book was set with wooden type, then it is more than 200 years old. This book is not classified "special," so it is not printed with wooden type.

(D) The mower will operate only if the engine is not flooded. The engine is flooded if the foot pedal is depressed. The foot pedal is not depressed, so the mower will operate.

(E) If the kiln is too hot, then the plates will crack. If the plates crack, then the artisan must redo the order. The artisan need not redo the order. Thus, the kiln was not too hot.

8. Executive: We recently ran a set of advertisements in the print version of a travel magazine and on that magazine's website. We were unable to get any direct information about consumer response to the print ads. However, we found that consumer response to the ads on the website was much more limited than is typical for website ads. We concluded that consumer response to the print ads was probably below par as well.

The executive's reasoning does which one of the following?

(A) bases a prediction of the intensity of a phenomenon on information about the intensity of that phenomenon's cause

(B) uses information about the typical frequency of events of a general kind to draw a conclusion about the probability of a particular event of that kind

(C) infers a statistical generalization from claims about a large number of specific instances

(D) uses a case in which direct evidence is available to draw a conclusion about an analogous case in which direct evidence is unavailable

(E) bases a prediction about future events on facts about recent comparable events

9. On the basis of relatively minor morphological differences, some scientists suggest that Neanderthals should be considered a species distinct from Cro-Magnons, the forerunners of modern humans. Yet the fact that the tools used by these two groups of hominids living in different environments were of exactly the same type indicates uncanny behavioral similarities, for only if they faced the same daily challenges and met them in the same way would they have used such similar tools. This suggests that they were members of the same species, and that the morphological differences are due merely to their having lived in different environments.

If the statements above are true, then each of the following could be true EXCEPT:

(A) Morphological differences between the members of two populations do not guarantee that the two populations do not belong to the same species.

(B) The daily challenges with which an environment confronts its inhabitants are unique to that environment.

(C) There are greater morphological differences between Cro-Magnons and modern humans than there are between Cro-Magnons and Neanderthals.

(D) Use of similar tools is required if members of two distinct groups of tool-making hominids are to be considered members of the same species.

(E) Through much of their coexistence, Cro-Magnons and Neanderthals were geographically isolated from one another.

10. Conservation officers justified their decision to remove a pack of ten coyotes from a small island by claiming that the coyotes, which preyed on wild cats and plover, were decimating the plover population and would soon wipe it out. After the coyotes were removed, however, the plover population plummeted dramatically, and within two years plover could no longer be found on the island.

    Which one of the following would, if true, most help explain the phenomenon described above?

(A) Plover are ground-nesting birds, which makes them easy prey for coyotes.

(B) Wild cat and plover populations tend to fluctuate together.

(C) Coyotes are not susceptible to any of the diseases that commonly infect plover or wild cats.

(D) The wild cat population on the island was once significantly larger than it is currently.

(E) The coyotes preyed mainly on wild cats, and wild cats prey on plover.

11. Jurist: A nation's laws must be viewed as expressions of a moral code that transcends those laws and serves as a measure of their adequacy. Otherwise, a society can have no sound basis for preferring any given set of laws to all others. Thus, any moral prohibition against the violation of statutes must leave room for exceptions.

    Which one of the following can be properly inferred from the jurist's statements?

(A) Those who formulate statutes are not primarily concerned with morality when they do so.

(B) Sometimes criteria other than the criteria derived from a moral code should be used in choosing one set of laws over another.

(C) Unless it is legally forbidden ever to violate some moral rules, moral behavior and compliance with laws are indistinguishable.

(D) There is no statute that a nation's citizens have a moral obligation to obey.

(E) A nation's laws can sometimes come into conflict with the moral code they express.

12. A summer day is "pleasant" if there are intermittent periods of wind and the temperature stays below 84°F (29°C) all afternoon. A summer day with high humidity levels is "oppressive" either if the temperature stays above 84°F (29°C) all afternoon or if there is no wind.

Which one of the following summer weather reports most closely conforms to the principles stated above?

(A) The temperature on Friday stayed below 82°F (28°C) all day, and there was no wind at all. It was a day of low humidity, and it was a pleasant day.

(B) On Monday, the temperature ranged from 85°F to 90°F (30°C to 32°C) from early morning until night. It was an oppressive day even though the humidity levels were low.

(C) On Tuesday, the temperature neither rose above nor fell below 84°F (29°C) throughout late morning and all afternoon. It was a pleasant day because there were occasional periods of wind.

(D) On Wednesday, a refreshing breeze in the early morning became intermittent by late morning, and the day's humidity levels were constantly high. It was an oppressive day, even though the temperature did not rise above 84°F (29°C) all day.

(E) On Thursday morning, the air was very still, and it remained windless for the whole day. Humidity levels for the day were high, and even though the temperature fell below 84°F (29°C) between early and late afternoon, it was an oppressive day.

13. Mariah: Joanna has argued that Adam should not judge the essay contest because several of his classmates have entered the contest. However, the essays are not identified by author to the judge and, moreover, none of Adam's friends are classmates of his. Still, Adam has no experience in critiquing essays. Therefore, I agree with Joanna that Adam should not judge the contest.

Which one of the following principles, if valid, most helps to justify Mariah's argument?

(A) A suspicion of bias is insufficient grounds on which to disqualify someone from judging a contest.

(B) Expertise should be the primary prerequisite for serving as a contest judge.

(C) The ability of a judge to make objective decisions is more important than that judge's content expertise.

(D) In selecting a contest judge, fairness concerns should override concern for the appropriate expertise.

(E) A contest judge, no matter how well qualified, cannot judge properly if the possibility of bias exists.

Summary

- Arguments make up half of the questions on the LSAT. You must work hard to improve in this section if you want to reach your potential on test day.
- Always understand the question task before you read the argument. Some questions require you to find the conclusion and the premises; others require a different analysis. Knowing the question types and what makes the credited response correct for that question type will help you get through the section with speed and accuracy.
- Start thinking about your pacing plan. Know how many arguments you will attempt on test day.
- As you practice, look for similarities among arguments. You'll find that many arguments follow recognizable patterns; understanding these patterns will help you analyze the argument, eliminate wrong answers, and select the credited response.